

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 08837 111119Z

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INFO USIA WASHDC

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TAGS: PARM, NATO, US

SUBJECT: NEWS REPORT ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN MBFR

1. FINANCIAL TIMES OF JUNE 11 CARRIES PAUL LEWIS STORY,
DATELINE WASHINGTON JUNE 10, WHICH FOLLOWS:

"U.S. READY TO CUT N-STRENGTH IN EUROPE. THE FORD
ADMINISTRATION IS NOW PREPARED IN PRINCIPLE TO REDUCE THE
NUMBER OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS THAT IT STORES IN
EUROPE, AS PART OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION
CUTTING THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN FORCES MAINTAINED BY BOTH
NATO AND THE WARSAW PACT.

THE AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT AN "IMPROVED" ALLIANCE

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PAGE 02 LONDON 08837 111119Z

OFFER OF THIS KIND PROVIDES THE BEST HOPE OF REVIVING THE

LONG-STALLED "MBFR" FORCE-REDUCTION TALKS - AND, IN PARTICULAR, OF PERSUADING THE RUSSIANS TO ACCEPT A COMMON FORCE LEVEL CEILING WITH NATO WHICH WOULD IMPLY A LARGER REDUCTION IN WARSAW PACT TROOPS, AS WELL AS ADDITIONAL CUTS IN THEIR HEAVY CONCENTRATIONS OF ARMOUR.

IT IS ASSUMED THAT SUCH A CHANGE OF TACTICS TOWARD THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS WILL ALSO WIN THE SUPPORT OF THE OTHER NATO ALLIES AND THAT THERE WILL BE NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE IN EUROPE TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF SOME TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE FORCE CUTS THAT NATO COUNTRIES ARE PREPARED TO OFFER.

HOWEVER, THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION REMAINS UNDECIDED AT THE MOMENT ABOUT THE BEST TIME TO LAUNCH A NEW MBFR INITIATIVE ALONG SUCH LINES, AS WELL AS ABOUT THE PRECISE DETAILS OF THE OFFER IT SHOULD MAKE - AND BOTH MATTERS WILL REQUIRE CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE OTHER NATO ALLIES.

IN GENERAL TERMS, THE FEELING HERE IS THAT THE WEST SHOULD WAIT UNTIL THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE IS OUT OF THE WAY AND MORE PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON THE SECOND SALT NEGOTIATIONS ON LIMITING RUSSIAN AND AMERICAN STRATEGIC NUCLEAR ARMS. THIS IS PARTLY BECAUSE THE RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES SEEM TO HAVE DIFFICULTY IN CONCENTRATING ON MORE THAN ONE SECURITY NEGOTIATION AT A TIME."

2. FINANCIAL TIMES IS ONLY PUBLICATION IN WHICH POSSIBLE

NUCLEAR COMPONENT OF MBFR HAS BEEN MENTIONED.

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